

# The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

## Our top 15 Insider Tips



### INSIDER TIP ▶ Stroll with a view

Enjoy the wonderful views and history on the Golden Gate Promenade. Fly a kite, watch the kite-boarders perform their fantastic acrobatics or just join in and play soccer on the grass → p. 30

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Modern history

The Contemporary Jewish Museum (photo right) never fails to fascinate visitors with changing exhibitions and events they can participate in such as a Refrigerator Magnet-Poetry-Slam-Workshop → p. 55

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Straight to you plate

The Swan Oyster Depot serves delicacies from the ocean in an easy-going atmosphere → p. 67

### INSIDER TIP ▶ A mighty midget of a shop

Two cheerful ladies prepare deliciously spicy – and amazingly inexpensive – sandwiches behind the counter of Saigon Sandwiches → p. 71

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Parla Italiano?

The Caffe Trieste in the heart of North Beach (photo above) serves probably the best espresso in town and makes you feel like you are in Italy → p. 62

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Fine prospects for veggies

San Francisco's best chefs make their purchases at the Ferry Plaza Farmer's Market and try out any unfamiliar delicacies at the countless stands → p. 78

### INSIDER TIP ▶ In the bag!

Not only cycle messengers hang the trendy Timbuk2 bags over their shoulders when they struggle up and then shoot down the city's hills on their own or rented bicycles → p. 79

### INSIDER TIP ▶ The four elements

Earth, air, fire and water set the tone in the Hotel Metropolis and there is also a library where you can relax → p. 96

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Please touch!

Touch, hear, see and learn all about science: this is possible in the interactive Exploratorium science museum → p. 104

### INSIDER TIP ▶ On the waves and in the clouds

In October, San Francisco celebrates Fleet Week with ship parades, big-band music and stunt planes flying only a few inches above the roofs → p. 107

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Lunch with a view of the Bay

The dockyard workers have been fortifying themselves with fish and chip and coffee in Red's Java House since 1923 – a perfect place to get out of the stormy wind on the Bay for a moment → p. 63

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Really cool souvenirs

If you have to buy T-shirts and coffee mugs, those from the National Park Store at Pier 39 are far and away the best → p. 75

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Sayonara, San Francisco

Traditional teatime in Japantown? Not here! Today, not only Otaku hang out at the new shopping mall called New People with its cinema and café. Those who want to be hip also buy the latest street fashions from Tokyo on the upper floor → p. 77

### INSIDER TIP ▶ 'He wishes you happy holiday'

Off to Yoda Fountain: Master Yoda waits for you in front of the entrance to Lucas Arts and ILM – two pillars of George Lucas' medium empire. Darth Vader and Boba Fat have made it into the lobby → p. 105

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Recording in progress!

Have you always wanted to make your own CD? No problem: when you book your room in the Mosser Hotel, you can reserve the hotel's sound studio at the same time → p. 94



# BEST OF ...

## GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

FOR FREE

### ● *Free concerts*

In spite of being so modern, San Franciscans still appreciate cultural attractions. The many free open-air concerts, classical operas and plays such as 'Shakespeare in the Park' are wildly popular → [p. 86](#)

### ● *Beach trip with a campfire*

This is free and fun, even if the water is not all that warm: at Baker Beach, children and dogs run for all they're worth, and young and old get together at wild Ocean Beach for picnics around enormous campfires → [p. 28 and 43](#)

### ● *Chinatown unplugged*

Chinatown's small streets (photo) are much more authentic than Grant Avenue that tourists like to visit. Stop off at the tiny Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Company and listen to the hairdresser next door playing his fiddle → [p. 104](#)

### ● *In Golden Gate Park*

Golden Gate Park is wilder than its pendant Central Park in New York but there is still a lot to do and discover here – and, it's all free! Show the Yanks how football is played back home or take part in a game of Frisbee golf → [p. 48](#)

### ● *Look inside the cable-car machinery*

Do you know how cable cars work? You can find the answer to this question by visiting the Cable Car Museum where you will see the cables, which are usually underground, spinning around enormous discs → [p. 46](#)

### ● *San Francisco tour for insiders*

What can you do after you've seen everything? Book one of the around 30 monthly tours organised by the San Francisco City Guides and have the locals show you places you never knew existed in the city → [p. 114](#)



Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of ...' tips

## ONLY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Unique experiences

### ● *The bridge over the Golden Gate*

The Golden Gate Bridge is probably San Francisco's most famous landmark. Of course, you can drive over it but you will be rewarded with the most magnificent views if you brave the winds and walk across (photo) → [p. 29](#)

### ● *Blocks of Victorian houses*

The *Painted Ladies* on Alamo Square are a must for all keen photographers. Go a little way up into the park and the downtown skyscrapers will tower up as the perfect background → [p. 37](#)

### ● *Ride the cable car running boards*

In this respect, San Francisco's cable cars are absolutely unique worldwide. Jump onto a running board, hold on tight and enjoy the rattling trip through all the districts of town → [p. 44](#)

### ● *Seals at Pier 39*

For many years now, hordes of seals have taken over a dock to the west of Pier 39. Today, the noisy troop has developed into a bigger attraction for many tourists than Pier 39 itself with all its shops → [p. 50](#)

### ● *Ice cream and cars on Lombard Street*

Is anything better than ice cream from Swensen's that first opened in 1948? With your ice cream firmly in your hand, you can watch the cars attempting to manoeuvre around the bends on Lombard Street → [p. 49 and 63](#)

### ● *Fried chicken feet anybody?*

Chinese cooks work painstakingly to prepare this and many other specialities that the waiters then wheel to the tables on trolleys for you to make your choice. A must; in New Asia, for example → [p. 67](#)

### ● *It's all fresh at Farmer's Market*

Not only the quality is first rate, the prices are too. Twice a week there is a fine selection of freshly harvested products at reasonable prices at Farmer's Market on Market Street – enjoy your meal! → [p. 78](#)



ONLY IN

# THE PERFECT DAY

## San Francisco in 24 hours

### 09:00am BREAKFAST AT A DINER COUNTER

It's easier to get moving after a good breakfast: The day in San Francisco's neighbourhoods begins with a hearty American breakfast in the *Pinecrest Diner* (401 Geary St.) one block away from Union Square. Sit at the counter and watch how speedily the cooks prepare the meals.

### 10:30am TAKE THE CABLE CAR

Walk one block to the east along Geary Street: get onto the *cable car* → p. 44 (photo left); if you buy a one-day pass you don't have to wait in the long queue at the terminus. It doesn't matter which line you take, both stop at the corner of Powell & Washington where you get off and walk two blocks east.

### 11:00am DETOUR TO CHINATOWN

Welcome to *Chinatown* → p. 43 or, more exactly, to Portsmouth Square the first public square in the city. This is a good place to start out on a tour through one of the oldest districts in San Francisco with its enchanting lanes, authentic Asian fruit and vegetable shops, and all the small and large shops selling goods of all kinds.

### 12:00pm AT FISHERMAN'S WHARF

Take the cable car from Powell & Washington towards *Fisherman's Wharf* → p. 43 (photo right); the Powell-Hyde line ends at Aquatic Park, the Powell-Mason line, three blocks to the south. Even if you don't feel liking visiting the shops at *Pier 39* → p. 50, you should at least take a look at the sea lions lolling about to the left of it. Is your stomach starting to rumble? No problem, just go to *In-N-Out Burger* → p. 70 and order your lunch; take it away and eat it on the steps of the Maritime Museum or directly on the beach. The view of Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge will make it taste even better.

### 02:00pm THROUGH FORT MASON

Continue walking along the waterfront towards the Golden Gate Bridge until the road makes a right curve and leads up to a small rise. Follow the path through *Fort*



Get to know some of San Francisco's most fascinating aspects – right in the centre, at your own pace and all on a single day

*Mason* → p. 34 and take in the wonderful views of the city and Bay before catching the Muni Bus 28 towards Daly City Bart on Marina Boulevard.

### 02:30pm TO THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

After a short trip through the Marina district, past Presidio with a view of the Letterman Digital Arts Center on the left, the bus reaches the *Golden Gate Bridge* → p. 29. Get off and explore the small park at the bus stop that is joined by a bridge to a section of the second-longest bridge in the USA.

### 04:00pm INTO THE FORMER HIPPIE DISTRICT

After all this nature, it's time to venture into the urban jungle. Take a taxi to the junction of *Haight & Ashbury* → p. 37 where the hippies used to get together in the 1960s. Today there are still many oddball characters and shops here (photo). You can combat the first signs of weariness with a strong espresso in *The Grind coffee shop* (783 Haight St.)

### 06:00pm ALMOST LIKE MEXICO: MISSION DISTRICT

A change of scenery: walk or take Muni Bus 71 eastwards to Fillmore Street. Get on Muni Bus 22 there and off again at the 16th & Mission stop. *Hola!* Welcome to *Mission Street* → p. 42. Dive into the colourful buzz of activity a few blocks further south and experience Mexican hospitality in one of the many *taquerías*.

### 08:00pm NIGHTLIFT AT NORTH BEACH

After a short break to freshen up, it's time to throw yourself into the nightlife at *North Beach* → p. 43. How about a concert at *Bimbo's 365 Club* → p. 84, tasty baked goods at *Stella Pastry & Café* (446 Columbus Ave.) or just relaxed people-watching from one of the tables on the pavement in front of an Italian restaurant?



Take Muni lines 2, 3, 30, 38, 45, 91, or the Powell-Hyde or Powell-Mason cable cars, to the starting point Union Square stop